



The Federation of German Avifaunists (DDA) at work

Monitoring of geese and swans in Germany

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Goose counts have a long tradition in Germany and began in the mid 1960s. Since German reunification, the Federation of German Avifaunists (DDA) has coordinated the German goose census as part of waterbird monitoring. Whilst originally focusing on the monitoring of the more common goose species, the activities were considerably extended in 2005. The scheme now comprises, for both geese and swans:

- monitoring of wild populations,
- monitoring of breeding success,
- monitoring of populations of feral origin (not yet fully established) and
- collection of data on the occurrence of rare wild goose and swan species.

Currently the main emphasis of effort is on improvement of site coverage, to reduce the percentage of unidentified geese (mainly during roost counts) and to promote segregation of Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese. A new approach, begun in winter 2005/06, and combining roost counts in the morning (!) with counts in feeding areas, is being tested in several regions. This promising approach may eventually be extended to most of the important goose regions in Germany.

Tab. 1 Maximum estimated numbers of geese and swans in Germany for 2000–2005. Figures for flyway populations according to Wetlands International (2006): Waterbird Population Estimates – fourth edition. Legend: ↑ = increase; → = stable; ↓ = decrease; (↓) = probable decrease; ? = unknown.

Species	National max.	Season with max.	Flyway population	Percentage Germany	Trend 1995–2005
Mute Swan	70,000–80,000	midwinter	250,000	~30 %	↑
Bewick's Swan	10,000–15,000	spring	20,000	50–75 %	↑
Whooper Swan	25,000	midwinter	59,000	~40 %	↑
Tundra Bean Goose	350,000–450,000	autumn	600,000	60–75 %	→
Taiga Bean Goose	40,000–50,000	midwinter	70,000–90,000	~60 %	(↓)
Pink-footed Goose	300–1,000	autumn/midwinter	42,000	<2 %	↑
Greater White-fronted G.	300,000–400,000	autumn	1,000,000	30–40 %	→
Lesser White-fronted G.	10–30	autumn	8,000–13,000	–	?
Greylag Goose	120,000–130,000	autumn	500,000	25 %	↑
Barnacle Goose	170,000–200,000	spring	420,000	~45 %	↑
Dark-bellied Brant	80,000–110,000	spring	200,000	40–55 %	↓
Canada Goose	25,000–30,000	midwinter	–	–	↑



J. Steudtner

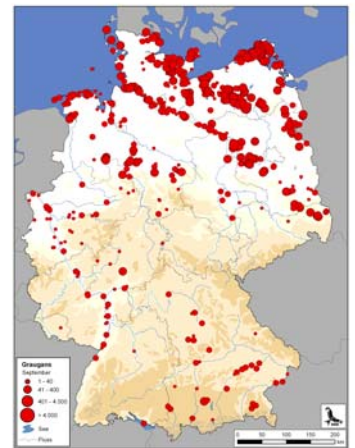


Fig. 1 Distribution of Greylag Geese in Germany during September. Maximum numbers counted per site in 1995–2004, as part of the waterbird monitoring scheme, are shown. This therefore excludes some feral populations.

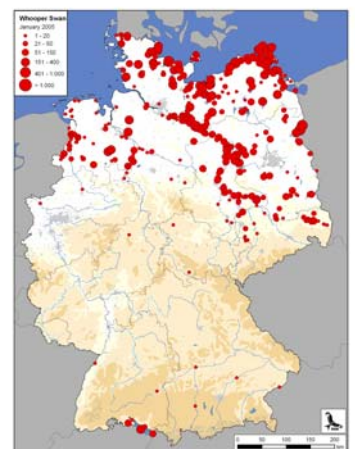


Fig. 2 Distribution of Whooper Swans in Germany during the special survey in January 2005.

